



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2021

TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE AND  
INDEPENDENT MEDIA FOR  
A VIBRANT DEMOCRACY



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BACKGROUND  
**MEDIA IN BHUTAN**



## Media in Bhutan

The media in Bhutan has come a long way since Kuensel was established in 1965 as a government bulletin and National Youth Association of Bhutan (NYAB) started the first radio broadcast in 1973. NYAB later became Bhutan Broadcasting Service.

In 1992, a royal edict corporatised Kuensel and BBS and delinked them from the government, marking a crucial phase in the development of the media in Bhutan.

The media was privatised in 2006, leading to the establishment of two private newspapers. Since then, the media in Bhutan has grown at a rapid pace. In 2012, there were 12 newspapers, five radio stations, and one television channel.

## Challenges and opportunities

The growth in the number of media houses has been too rapid to be sustainable. Today, the number of newspapers has dropped to eight and that of radio stations to four. Sustenance

is the biggest challenge for all of them, which leads to a high attrition rate and a number of associated challenges. The recent boom in social media adds another dimension to the media landscape in the country, which calls for better media literacy and education.

The rapid growth of news media and boom in social media can be turned into a transformative opportunity for the country's young democracy if enough support is rendered to the media organisations and media users. Bhutan Media Foundation can make this happen.





# BHUTAN MEDIA FOUNDATION: **WHO ARE WE?**



TASHICHHO DZONG  
THIMPHU, BHUTAN

The rights to freedom of information, expression and of the media enshrined in the Constitution are fundamental to democracy. In our small nation, media can be even more effective in encouraging debate and participation, vital to building a vibrant democracy.

However, today, our media agencies are young and their exemplary commitment and desire to perform their duties are not matched by adequate resources. As it is my sacred duty to ensure the success of our young democracy, I have decided, through the exercise of my Royal Prerogative of Kidu, to strengthen media agencies so that they may carry out their duties, without fear or favour, in the interest of democracy.

It is my hope that the Bhutan Media Foundation established under this Charter, shall serve to foster the growth of a strong responsible media capable of playing an important role in the social, economic and political growth of the nation.

Granted on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of February, 2010 at Tashichho Dzong.

**His Majesty The Druk Gyalpo**



## Establishment: the Royal Kasho

Bhutan Media Foundation was established through a Royal Charter issued by His Majesty the King on 21 February 2010 to foster the growth of a strong, responsible media capable of playing an important role in the social, economic and political growth of the nation.

## Vision

Vibrant democracy with responsible, independent, and credible media.

## Mission

Sustain democracy by developing the Bhutanese media through transformational initiatives that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster freedom of expression, information and press.

# Mandates

## Foster and strengthen professionalism

- Create opportunities for short- and long-term studies and training within and outside Bhutan.
- Support exchange programmes and links with training institutions, professional associations, research centres, and media organisations within and outside Bhutan.
- Support in-country journalism and mass communication programmes in colleges and institutes.
- Support participation in seminars, workshops, and conferences on issues related to the media.
- Institute in-country scholarships for journalism studies for Bhutanese students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

## Engaging communities

- Support media literacy and media education initiatives, with special emphasis on youth.
- Create access to media and media literature to educational institutes and grassroots local organizations.
- Support programmes that use technology to foster engagement.
- Promote and support the involvement and empowerment of people in the utilisation of media for social change.

## Support advocacy and policy

- Uphold the rights of citizens to information, and freedom of expression and media.
- Protect the rights of journalists, media houses, and their sources.
- Safeguard editorial independence from authorities and proprietors.
- Institute systems to recognise journalistic works.
- Support media studies, audience surveys, research, etc.
- Contribute towards enabling environment for media development by supporting review, amendment and enactment of existing Acts, Rules and Regulations, legislations and policies, and formulation of related legislations.

## Promote media development

- Support the establishment of relevant agencies that will address the challenges and issues faced by the media.
- Strengthen partnership and cooperation among media agencies and other relevant partners by supporting and encouraging initiatives that allow media professionals from varied background to interact, address common issues, advance professional skills and assist in the professional growth of the Bhutanese media.
- Support initiatives in sustainable media business development



# STRATEGIC GOALS



# GOAL 1

Support professional growth of Bhutanese media through:

**Training:**

Conduct or support custom-designed training and mentorship for professionals working in the Bhutanese media houses at basic, intermediate, and advanced levels.

**Learning opportunities:**

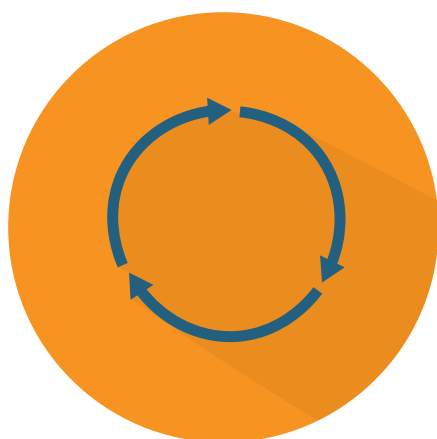
Support or facilitate scholarships, internships, or participation in seminars and workshops for media professionals within and outside Bhutan.

**Professional discourse:**

Organise or support workshops, seminars and conferences to promote media discourse and scholarship.

**Awards and grants:**

Support journalism awards and grants to promote excellence in journalism.



## GOAL 2

Support or facilitate sustainability of media organisations through:

**Direct support:**

Provide or facilitate direct support to the media houses such as printing subsidy and distribution cost.

**Online transition:**

Support, through training and direct support, the media houses transition online for a wider audience and better revenue generation.



## GOAL 3

Support media literacy and education through:

**Training:**

Conduct or support media literacy training at basic, intermediate and advanced levels across the country.

**Clubs:**

Initiate and support media literacy clubs in colleges and schools to promote and sustain media literacy initiatives of the Foundation.

**Studies:**

Conduct or support media studies and audience surveys to understand media literacy needs of the population.



## GOAL 4

Build partnership and collaboration through:

**Fund mobilisation:**

Identify a pool of donors, both local and international, and sustain partnership with them.

**Collaboration:**

Build and sustain collaboration with the Royal Government of Bhutan, civil society organisations, and private sector organisations to widen the Foundation's reach and augment its public profile.

**Industry engagement:**

Engage with the media industry to understand their needs and take them on board.

**Community engagement:**

Engage communities in media literacy, education, and awareness programmes

# IV

## IMPLEMENTATION OF GOALS



## Monitoring and evaluation

We are guided by a Board of Directors representing His Majesty the King, the Royal Government of Bhutan, and the media industry. We report to the office of His Majesty the King and Civil Society Organisations Authority on a regular basis. We monitor and evaluate the progress of our projects, funding status, and overall performance annually to identify risks, constraints, and opportunities along the way. Our reporting system is backed by a strong archival and communication strategy.

## Communication

We are guided by a strong communication strategy that ensures swift flow of information to and from our donors, partners, and stakeholders. Our communication is conducted across a range of online and traditional channels. Besides traditional channels like letters, press releases, and reports, we actively communicate through the following channels:

**Website:** [www.bmf.bt](http://www.bmf.bt)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/bhutanmedia](https://www.facebook.com/bhutanmedia)

**Twitter:** @BhutanMediaFdn

**Instagram:** @bhutanmediafoundation

**LinkedIn:** [www.linkedin.com/in/bhutan-media-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/in/bhutan-media-foundation)

**Flickr:** [www.flickr.com/photos/bhutanmediafoundation](https://www.flickr.com/photos/bhutanmediafoundation)



## Partners and stakeholders

Our primary beneficiaries include eight newspapers (one daily and seven weeklies), one television channel, and four radio stations. However, our media literacy and education mandate as a public benefit organisation, not to mention the crosscutting relevance of the media, requires us to serve the Bhutanese public at large.

We will cater to 575 professionals in 13 media houses (BMF survey, November 2018) who include editorial, marketing, and administrative and finance staff. Besides, we hope to reach all sections of the population directly or through different partners like the colleges.

Since our establishment, we have partnered with three international organisations, six Bhutanese organisations, and 22 media stakeholders. We hope to continue to expand our partnership.

## International Partners

International Republican Institute  
Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation (NUFFIC)  
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation  
Centre for Media and Health  
Social Justice Initiative  
Global Investigative Journalism Network  
Global Media Monitoring Project

## Local Partners

- Bhutan Network for Empowering Women
- Gross National Happiness Commission
- Royal Government of Bhutan
- National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC)
- Tarayana Foundation
- RENEW
- Rainbow Bhutan
- Lhak-Sam

## Stakeholders

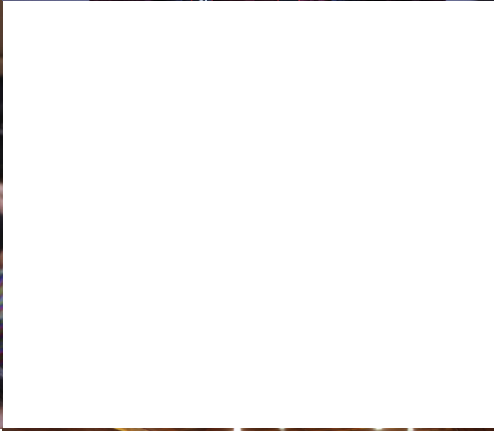
### Print

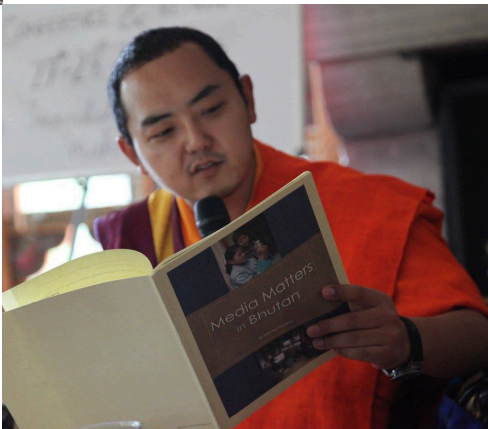
- Bhutan Times
- Bhutan Today
- Business Bhutan
- Druk Neytshuel
- Gyalchi Sarshog
- Kuensel
- The Bhutanese
- The Journalist

### Broadcast

- Bhutan Broadcasting Service (TV & Radio)
- Kuzoo FM
- Radio Valley
- Yiga Radio







## HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT US?



You can make one-time or annual **DONATION** to the media development fund of BMF.



You can **FUND** a programme, project, or a scholarship.



You can **PARTNER** with BMF on media development activities.

Visit [www.bmf.bt](http://www.bmf.bt) to learn more about how to support us.



## **BHUTAN MEDIA FOUNDATION**

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